

City of Cambridge

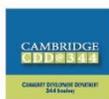
Food Truck Pilot

Eat Authentic Food | Support Local Business | Enjoy Public Space



Evaluation Report

September 2018



Acknowledgements

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About

The City of Cambridge Food Truck Pilot was designed to provide entrepreneurial opportunities for food truck operators, create more diverse food options in targeted areas, and bring additional street level amenities to Cambridge public spaces.

The Food Truck Pilot provides access to select public vending locations for food truck operators who are fully permitted and licensed in the City of Cambridge. Special consideration was given to women and minority-owned businesses, businesses operated by Cambridge residents, new businesses (2 years old and under), and businesses without a brick-and-mortar restaurant operation.

The Food Truck Pilot encourages independent and locally-owned food business operators to test their concepts in the Cambridge market through food truck vending in select public spaces and times. Food truck shifts were determined by an internal review committee that vetted applications based on a point system that was devised to ensure variation at each location.

The Food Truck Pilot launched in the Fall of 2017 and trucks began vending when locations opened in April 2018. The vending season for the Pilot was slated to end in October of 2018 but has been extended to April 2019. Evaluation of the Food Truck Pilot occurred between the months of May and September 2018.

This report was compiled to present findings from the Food Truck Pilot evaluation surveys of truck operators, food truck customers, and Pilot locations as well as to determine if the Pilot could convert to a permanent program.

For more information about the Food Truck Pilot, visit cambridgema.gov/foodtruckpilot.

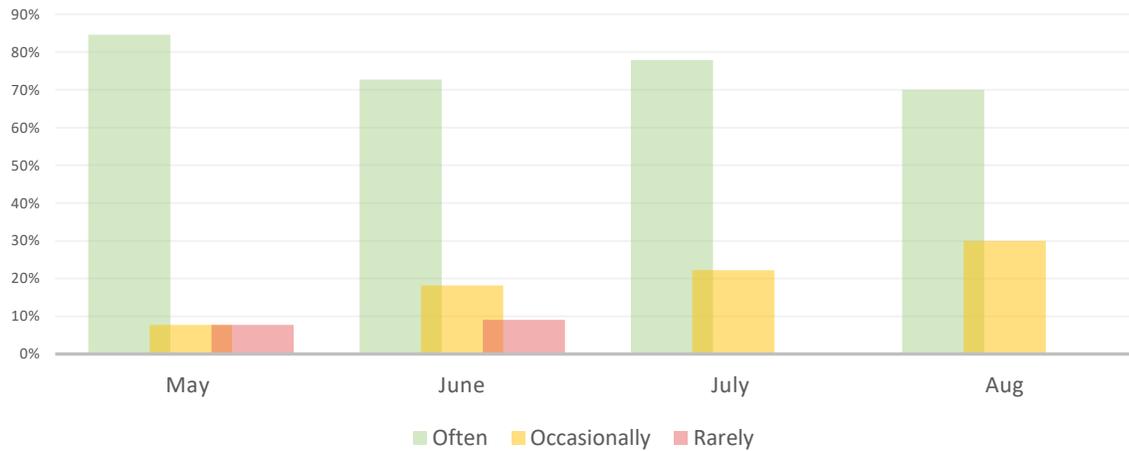


Truck Evaluation

TRUCKS ARE SATISFIED AND OPERATING IN PROFITABLE LOCATIONS.

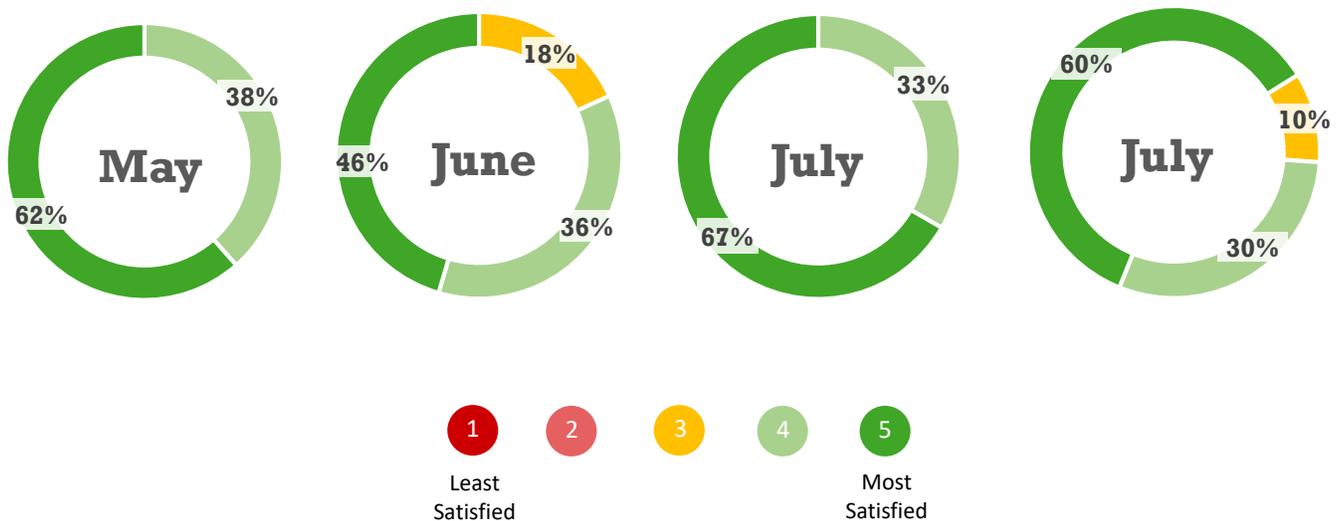
The majority of truck operators often met their minimum number of order/sales from month to month.

Percentage of Trucks that often met Minimum Sale Targets



Truck operators regularly rated their shift satisfaction as high (5 out of 5) from month to month.

Q: Please rate your satisfaction with your shift and location (5 being most satisfied)



NEW BUSINESSES WERE ABLE TO GROW THROUGH EXPOSURE FROM THE PILOT.

50% of trucks presently vending in the Pilot are new businesses (defined as 2 years or younger in Food Truck Pilot application).

- Of those, 2 trucks secured catering jobs because of the exposure from the Pilot.
- Of those, 1 truck secured a new Cambridge location (Harvard University).



Owner of The Pull Up, Robin Brown (right), launched his Latin/Soul Food business through the Food Truck Pilot and has since gone on to secure an additional vending location in Cambridge (Science Plaza through Harvard University) as well as private catering jobs.

PILOT SERVED TARGET AUDIENCE OF WOMEN AND MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES (WMBE).

WMBE comprised the bulk of Pilot participants across the season.

WMBE Food Truck Participation Rate



WMBE WERE COMPLIMENTARY OF THE PILOT AND THE CITY'S EFFORTS.

Q "The Food Truck Pilot prioritized women and minority-owned businesses in the application process. What else could CDD do to support you as a woman or minority-owned business?"

"Everything is perfect up to date. A fair opportunity is all that is asked for."

"I'm not sure! Events for women & minority business owners/leaders to meet each other and/or mentor each other?"

"The city of Cambridge can generate more revenue by creating more vending spots. We are aware that the city has few very congested areas without vending spot. The city can hold polling within its residents whether to expand the pilot program's spots. This will eventually strengthen the minority-owned business. Also, the city should allow the pilot program to run the whole year long. Some customers have expressed that food trucks are blessing for them, as they get tired of having lunch from cafeterias. I am sure people would like this program to run all year long."

"Try to extend the program throughout winter."

"Nothing at the moment, the program is working well."

"More opportunities like this!"

"I think it's been fantastic, just needed more customers."

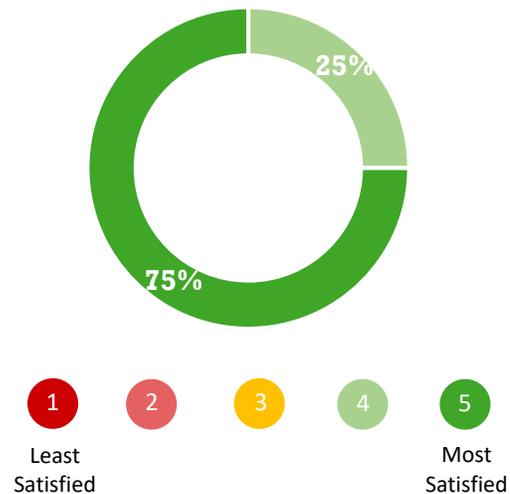
"I feel CDD has done a very good job prioritizing women business owners."



THE CITY FOSTERED A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR WMBE AND NEW BUSINESSES.

75% of WMBE truck operators rated their satisfaction with City support as high (5 out of 5).

Q "Rate your satisfaction with how well the City of Cambridge supported you as a WMBE."



THE PILOT POSITIVELY IMPACTED OTHER CITY OF CAMBRIDGE PROCESSES.

- The Cambridge License Commission streamlined their process for reviewing and approving trucks that vend on public property.
- The Department of Public Works replicated the Food Truck Pilot application process, implementing a point system for their commercial recycling pilot so that women and minority-owned businesses could be prioritized.



Customer Satisfaction

CUSTOMERS ENJOYED THE CONVENIENCE AND DIVERSE OPTIONS FOOD TRUCKS PROVIDE.

Q "What are your main reasons for visiting food trucks?"

Reason	# of Responses	% of Respondents
Convenient and fast	120	83%
Unique and diverse food	89	62%
Time and location	57	40%
Already a fan of some food trucks	48	33%
Affordable	43	30%
No good food options in the area	38	26%
Forgot to bring lunch	27	19%
Healthy or sustainable	26	18%
Dining environment	10	7%
Fan of exotic food	1	1%



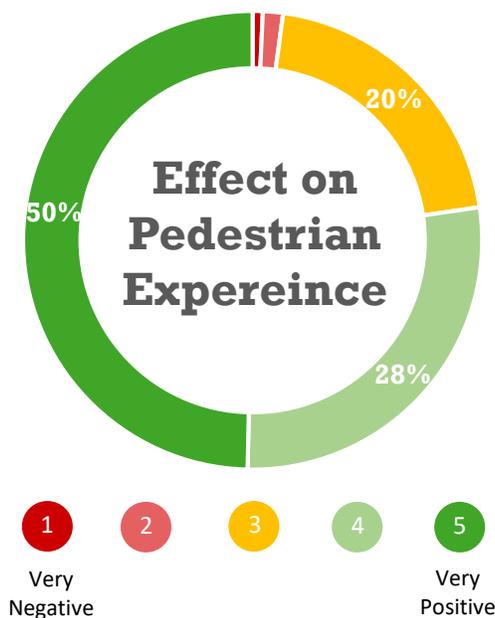
A MAJORITY OF CUSTOMERS VISITED THE FOOD TRUCKS ON AVERAGE 2 OR MORE TIMES A WEEK.

56% of customers visit the food trucks on average two or more times per week.



FOOD TRUCKS IMPROVED THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE.

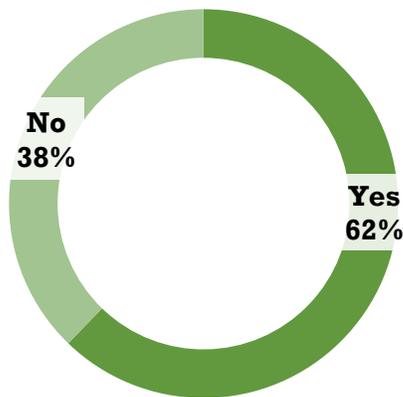
Overall most customers rated the food trucks as having a neutral to positive effect on the pedestrian experience of the area. On a scale of 1-5, 5 being the most positive, 78% of customers ranked food trucks as a 4 or a 5 on this scale.



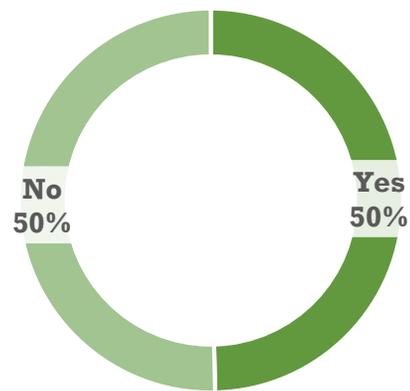
Broader Economic Activity

A MAJORITY OF FOOD TRUCK CUSTOMERS VISTED LOCAL BUSINESSES IN THE FOOD TRUCK LOCATIONS, BUT FOOD TRUCKS THEMSELVES DO NOT NECESSARILY MAKE CUSTOMERS MORE LIKELY TO VISIT LOCAL BUSINESSES.

Have you visited other stores in the area of the food trucks?



Do you think having food trucks out makes you more likely to visit the other businesses and restaurants in the area?



A MAJORITY (54%) OF CUSTOMERS FOUND THE FOOD TRUCKS BY WALKING BY.

How did you find out about the food trucks?	# of responses	Percentage of surveys
Walking by	78	54%
Friend/ Referral	39	27%
Online via the City of Cambridge (social media/website/newsletter)	29	20%
Truck vendor's social media	15	10%
Flyers / Banners around Cambridge	6	4%
Work	4	3%





Food Truck Pilot Evaluation Report

About the Economic Development Division

The Economic Development Division (EDD) is responsible for a wide range of activities designed to meet the City's need for a diversified and thriving economic base. EDD does this through promoting thriving commercial districts; cultivating a supportive environment for small, women and minority-owned businesses; and marketing Cambridge as a location for business and maintaining a supportive business climate. EDD offers various resources and services to the businesses community of Cambridge such as site search and selection assistance, one-on-one meetings with staff, various classes and workshops, expert consulting services in various industries, interior improvement grants, ADA accessibility grants, and storefront improvement grants. For more information on any of these programs visit:

cambridge.gov/business